

# Catawba County Emergency Medical Services Standard Operating Guidelines

## Building Evacuation

This document should serve as a *Guideline* for EMS manned buildings in the event evacuation is needed for any purpose. This may be caused by both natural and man-made causes or reasons.

Our evacuation plan describes procedures for accounting for all evacuated employees and visitors. It is the responsibility of all personnel to keep exit ways and corridors clear at all times. Exit doors must never be blocked, locked, or obstructed. When the need for an evacuation occurs, due to either fire, chemical, or a technical disaster, all employees are to leave the building after they have safely evacuated their responsible patients and observe the following procedures:

- Be sure the exits and corridors are always maintained safe and passable.
- Check to see if the primary evacuation route is available. If it is safe and clear, use this exit to evacuate.
- If the primary route is blocked, use the secondary route.
- If both routes are blocked, make every effort to clear at least one of the exits.
- If both exits are blocked, go to the designated safe room. These rooms are designated on evacuation plans at each base.
  - Close the door to the room.
  - If necessary, break a window by placing a blanket or coat over the window to prevent cuts.
- If exits are open and clear, escort visitors, etc. to the nearest exit.
- Be sure all doors and windows are closed as you exit the building.
- Once the evacuation is complete, all employees should attempt to locate all visitors, etc. and keep them together in a group in the appropriate assigned designated meeting area.
- Do not return into the building. Stay with your group unless otherwise instructed.
- Be careful to stay out of the way of any fire fighting equipment or emergency response personnel. Although OSHA requires a minimum passage of 28", The American With Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates a corridor width of 32". Every employee must be constantly aware of items and equipment stored in the hallways which could potentially block or restrict the free escape of individuals in times of emergency evacuation. Never permit the routine accumulation of supplies in the hallways. Any time you observe the accumulation of "stuff" either remove it or report it to your Safety Officer.

Each workplace building must have at least two means of escape remote from each other to be used in a fire or other type of emergency. All approved exits are marked by an illuminated, readily visible sign.

EMS crews should be familiar with the base entrance and exit locations. Evacuation routes are posted in a prominent location at each base. These evacuation routes show primary and secondary evacuation routes, location of fire extinguishers and a floor plan of the building.

EMS personnel should whenever possible remove the ambulances from the bays and secure the units away from the building. This will ensure readiness for the service area as well as a place for crews to take shelter during the time of the emergency. If it is to be a long duration incident the crews should be relocated to an appropriate location or facility to cover the service area.

In the event units cannot be moved (i.e. gas leak in the bay) then they should be left and the EMS Shift Supervisor should be notified so that crew pull-ups may occur for coverage of that certain service area. Units left in place should at the first opportunity be secured and removed with permission of the Incident Commander on site.

Personnel should meet at designated locations for each base. These locations will be designated on the posted evacuation plan. This will ensure that a rapid accountability may take place and a plan of action formulated to mitigate the situation. Ambulance units that are removed from the building should be located away from the building in a manner as to not interfere with incoming emergency response vehicles (i.e. fire units, law enforcement).

Once clear of the building and accountability has been taken place EMS personnel should assist in the mitigation of the hazard and secure the property as needed. The EMS Shift Supervisor should respond to assist as well as notify the Chain of Command as to the incident in progress.

If a unit is enroute back to the base for any reason the crew should be notified and rerouted to standby at either Hospital or other appropriate location (i.e. fire department, rescue squad) so that they do not enter the potentially hazardous scene and can cover the service district.

**Remember this is a guideline and personal safety during an evacuation for any reason should come first. Remain calm and think before reacting.**

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